

“RRAFT ADVISORY COMMITTEE”

MEETING # 12 MINUTES

Monday, March 31, 2008

6:30 – 9:00 PM

Missoula FWP Headquarters

3201 Spurgin Road

Missoula

- **Opening and Agenda**

- *Charlie Sperry ~ FWP Recreation Management Specialist*

- Charlie opened the meeting and provided an overview of the agenda. He quickly reviewed the previous meeting's discussion on allocation mechanisms. He then reviewed how triggers could be used to identify appropriate management actions.

- **Handouts and Group Discussion – Allocating Commercial Use**

- *Charlie Sperry*

- In response to a request by committee members, Charlie provided copies of the Beaverhead and Big Hole Commercial Use Rules and provided an explanation on how they are implemented in the field. He also mentioned that there were no statewide rules for managing river recreation at the time the original Beaverhead and Big Hole rules were put in place. The rules were reevaluated and updated in 2005 based on the recommendations of a citizen advisory committee. He explained that overall, the public has had a fairly positive reaction to the rules and that the spirit of the rules has remained the same through revisions.

- The group shared their thoughts on the Beaverhead/Big Hole Rules. Comments included:

- When the rules were initially implemented the most controversial part was the closure of certain reaches to non-resident anglers.
- Non-resident regulations on the Blackfoot may not be an option for federal lands managed by the BLM.
- The idea of having temporary client days is helpful for smaller outfitters who cannot afford to buy an existing outfitter's business and helps prevent larger outfitters from gaining a monopoly.
- A fixed opportunity for commercial use is valuable but having a “back door” available for new outfitters to get into the business is good and has relieved resentment toward larger commercial businesses.
- Restrictions on the number of launches per day/reach has served as a quality control and provided incentive for people to spread out.

- **Group Discussion – Determining Triggers for Management Actions**

- *Charlie Sperry*

- Charlie provided a handout explaining qualitative analysis, quantitative analysis and professional judgment as ways of assessing conditions to determine when restrictions or rationing may be an appropriate management tool. The committee discussed methods for assessing conditions on the Blackfoot. The following comments were generated during that discussion.

- Qualitative measures, e.g. satisfaction surveys, have inherent problem such as potential to “miss” the opinions of displaced users and failure to include those with a historical perspective (what the river used to be like)
- Quantitative measures may be more reliable than qualitative measures but we need baseline data to establish those measures and that may take time.
- Professional judgment is important to include as part of the decision making process and should be backed up by qualitative and/or quantitative measures.
- We are currently at capacity in all reaches of the Blackfoot and we may be very close to a trigger point for rationing use.
- We need to try all other methods of addressing issues before rationing and there are many methods that have not yet been tried.
- Whether we are at a point where rationing is needed or not, we need to have an idea of what rationing would look like so we can stay ahead of the curve.
- A rationing system may not ever be necessary.
- Costs associated with trying less restrictive management actions such as law enforcement are substantial.
- Use will continue to increase and in many ways we may be getting close to triggering rationing. We need to be ready when that time comes.
- The recreation settings are different for different reaches and we should have different approaches to establishing triggers for different reaches.
- There are many different triggers that could be identified but which ones are the key ones for various reaches?
- Triggers may be related to behavior.
- Failure to include displaced users in qualitative measures is a valid concern but qualitative measures are still important for monitoring conditions.
- Assessing the satisfaction of users is important regardless of whether they have a historic perspective of what the river used to be like.
- People would rather self-regulate by changing when and where they recreate on the Blackfoot if that would avoid implementation of highly restrictive management actions.
- Conditions that are different than what they used to be does not necessarily equate to a negative experience.
- Rationing should only be used to affect the social experience and/or damage to the resource.
- We could create a system that requires an educational course in conjunction with getting a permit to float the river.
- Having a carnival atmosphere creates carnival-like behavior.
- A shuttle could be required instead of requiring permits.
- Different systems may be needed for weekend vs. weekday use
- **Meeting Wrap-up**
- *Charlie Sperry*
-Charlie asked the committee if they would be comfortable with FWP staff taking the material and suggestions that the committee has developed during all 12 meetings and creating a draft document that would synthesize and incorporate the various components of the management plan. This document would then be given back to the committee for their review and discussion. The committee supported this suggestion and agreed to cancel the meeting scheduled for April 14th and reschedule for May 21st.
- **Meeting Adjourned at 9:00 PM**

NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, May 21, 2008
6:30 pm – 9:00 pm
FWP Region 2 Headquarters
3201 Spurgin Road
Missoula